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The City of Tempe is a Certified Local Government, in association with the United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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Tempe Historic Preservation Office DATE PALM MANOR HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff Summary Report 2009.2742.0029 Tempe Historic Property Register #37 HPO 2009.02 **Tempe Historic Preservation Commission** 14A-4 HPC Public Hearing 04/09/2009

BACKGROUND + STATUS -

A nomination for historic designation and listing of the DATE PALM MANOR HISTORIC DISTRICT was submitted to the Tempe Historic Preservation Office by a consortium of property owners along with waivers of rights and remedies under A.R.S. §12-1134 executed by owners of 92% (n=35) of the lots in the proposed district. At a Neighborhood Meeting held March 12, 2909, the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission reached consensus to hold a public hearing, to take input from owners, stakeholders, and interested persons and to make a recommendation regarding the proposed designation. This staff summary and recommendation is provided for use by the commission in their deliberation.

LOCATION -

This is a public hearing for DATE PALM MANOR for a Historic Overlay District, consisting of thirty-eight (38) lots with single-family homes, on approximately 7.84 acres, located at 2106 S. Mill Avenue; 5-137 W. Palmcroft Drive; 2015-2030 S. Dromedary Drive; 32-121 W. Palmdale Drive; and 2019-2025 S. Dateland Drive, in the R1-6, Single-Family District and the R-3, Multi-Family Residential Limited District. DATE PALM MANOR is identified as a Cultural Resource Area in Tempe General Plan 2030.

SIGNIFICANCE -

DATE PALM MANOR is significant as a best example of early Post WWII custom home development in Tempe. When Agnew Construction began turning the Valsunda Date Gardens into an exclusive development of large and expensive homes care was taken to retain as many of the majestic date palms to provide a unique landscape setting for the upscale homes. Annexed along with the site for the new Tempe High School, this subdivision was the first residential inroad into the zone of agricultural operations south of residential development which ended at Broadway Road. The innovative curvilinear street pattern enhanced this pastoral setting while limited access further reinforced the peaceful and picturesque character of the neighborhood. Separation provided by limited access also improved safety and privacy for the neighborhood. Many homes in the Date Palm Manor Subdivision were built at twice the price of homes in contemporaneous Tempe subdivisions. Many prominent Tempe families relocated from older parts of the city to the innovative new neighborhood and Date Palm Manor Subdivision built out in just five years.

AGE -

DATE PALM MANOR began selling in 1954 and was substantially complete by 1959 with ninety-percent 90% of the lots developed. Average age of a home in the subdivision is now 53 years with construction dates ranging from 1953 to 1962 and a median year built value equal to 1956. The most frequently occurring year built value for homes in Date Palm Manor is 1955. With the median year built 1956, Date Palm Manor Subdivision homes average in the 95th percentile of all Tempe Properties in terms of age.

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CONDITION -

Agnew Construction built custom homes with unique designs in DATE PALM MANOR. These homes often sold at twice what contemporaneous subdivisions sold homes for. Agnew also sold lots to individuals who wanted to build their own house with the deed specifying minimum construction requirements. Accordingly, while it is difficult to identify temporal changes to these unique properties, the high degree of initial quality coupled with the large size of the original homes lends credibility to the appearance that relatively few changes have been made to areas of these properties visible from the rights-of-way.

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES -

DATE PALM MANOR was annexed into the city limits before it was developed. Agnew Construction advertised asphalt surfaced streets, curbs, and sidewalks were included in the price of the lots. In-place infrastructure appealed to the up-scale market Agnew was seeking and helped support requirements for quality design stated in the lot deeds for custom-built homes. Careful design of streets and lot layouts maximized retention of the spectacular date palms and greatly enhanced the feeling of an established neighborhood. At the private property level, properties contributing generally to the distinctive character of the district comprise roughly 92%, a substantial majority. Housing styles in Date Palm Manor represent mainstream if upscale tastes with the ubiquitous classic ranch house style being by far the most frequent form.

INTEGRITY -

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register, properties must not only be significant under ordinance criteria, and must also retain integrity. A district proposed for designation under criteria related to design and construction must, in general, retain integrity of setting, design, feeling, and materials. DATE PALM MANOR exceeds minimum requirements and continues to convey integrity of setting, design, materials, and feeling.

RECOMMENDATION -

Upon careful review Tempe HPO finds this property eligible for historic designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register and recommends that the Commission approve the nomination. DATE PALM MANOR is considered eligible for historic designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register as provided by Sec. 14A-4. Designation of landmarks, historic properties and historic districts –

- (b) The following criteria are established for designation of an historic district:
- (1) The district consists of an area in which are located a substantial concentration of properties, buildings or structures which individually meet the criteria in subsection (a) of this section above, as well as others which contribute generally to the overall distinctive character of the area, and are united historically or visually by plan or physical development; district boundaries coincide with documented historic boundaries such as early roadways, canals, subdivision plats or property lines; other district boundaries coincide with logical physical or man-made features and reflect recognized neighborhood or area boundaries; and other noncontributing properties or vacant parcels are included where necessary to create appropriate boundaries.

SUGGESTED MOTION -

"Move that the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Development Review Commission that the DATE PALM MANOR HISTORIC DISTRICT be designated historic and listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register"